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Developer dishes on selling seven-figure homes.

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This couple changed from suburban house to urban loft.

COVER: The downtown loft of Sandra Young, in the converted Hudson's Bay building. Photo: Darrell Noakes.

Saskatoon: For the People, By the People

Saskatoon really is a resident-friendly city. Not only is it continually taking steps to develop a safe and vibrant environment for its inhabitants; it's also preparing for even more people to move here.

Saskatoon is also the creation of its people, past, present and future. They make their unique contributions, helping to shape the

characters of the city and define it as an appealing place to live.

This issue of Saskatoon Home is dedicated to Saskatoon's richness and diversity as a place to live, created by the City, developers and residents.

From the past we profile the historic neighbourhood of Buena Vista, check out a restored heritage home and

vintage landscaping. We also talk to the "Rock Man," who's lived here a long time and created many of Saskatoon's "stone" rivers.

In the present, we explore the options different people have taken to create innovative homes—from the live/work option to converted and renovated urban condominiums to replacing or transforming older dwellings into new ones using infill, renovation or complete reconstruction.

Regarding the future, we look at some of the trends in homes — from neo-traditional designs to the popularity of living closer to the urban core, to the preferences of some folks for houses with a seven-figure price tag!

The members of this month's Professional Panel dish on what the City is doing for its residents as well as their favourite current and upcoming neighbourhoods.

We are also pleased to have a contribution from Saskatoon mayor Don Atchison on the proposal to increase the population of the downtown core to 10,000.

We are truly appreciative of and grateful to the many professionals and suppliers who are in Saskatoon to make your home living an optimal experience. We are proud to present these talented individuals and companies in our magazine and encourage you to use their services and purchase their products.

Enjoy!

DONA STURMANIS, EDITOR

HOME

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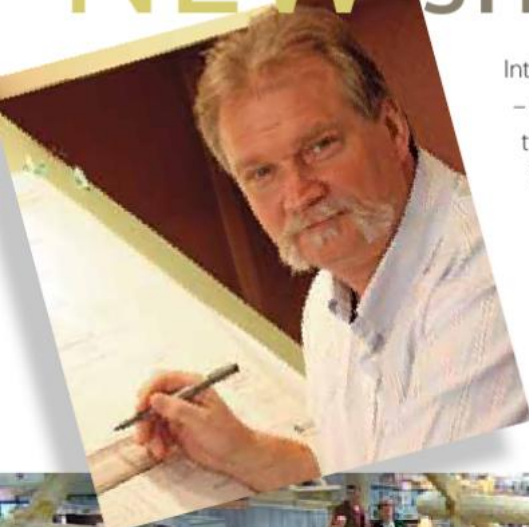
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Special guest professional **John Sillaots** will share his common sense approach on kitchen, bath, and basement renovations over the three days of the show. Owner of the successful Barnside Custom Cabinetry and Furniture in southern and eastern Ontario, John was also the host of his own HGTV show, the popular 'In the Workshop'.



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FRONTLINES

Homebuyers e-Value Mortgage Options

The 2010 Mortgage Consumer Survey, released April 26 by Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC), shows that the Internet has become an important resource for first-time home buyers with 89 per cent indicating that they looked online for mortgage-related information, while 84 per cent researched mortgage terms and

conditions before deciding on a mortgage option.

Additionally, more than two-thirds (69 per cent) of first-time home buyers used an online calculator to compare different options when shopping for a home. As a result, 85 per cent noted they had a good understanding of the size of mortgage they could afford before buying a home, with the average Canadian home buyer taking 12 months to plan their purchase.

"Canadians confirmed that they take the time to do research prior to buying a

home," said Pierre Serré, CMHC vice-president of insurance product and business development. "Informed home buyers contribute to the continued strength of Canada's housing system."

The survey noted that 81 per cent of recent home buyers indicate that they are comfortable with the level of their current mortgage debt.

More than two-thirds (68 per cent) of recent home buyers feel there is a strong chance they will pay off their mortgage sooner than required and more than a quarter (27 per cent) have already taken

steps to pay down their mortgage through lump-sum payments or through increased regular payments.

The on-line survey, which polled more than 2,500 active mortgage users, asked participants a series of questions designed to gauge the attitudes and sentiments of recent mortgage consumers in Canada. The survey has been conducted since 1999.

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Housing Activity to Stabilize in 2010 and 2011

Housing starts in Canada rebounded in the second half of 2009 and early 2010 and will stabilize over the next two years, according to Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation's (CMHC) second quarter Housing Market Outlook, Canada Edition.

Following a total of 149,081 units in 2009, housing starts are expected to be in the range of 166,900 to 199,600 units in 2010, with a point forecast of 182,000 units. In 2011, housing starts will be in the range of 148,600 to 208,800 units, with a point forecast of 179,600 units.

"Canadian housing markets have recovered from the low levels posted in early 2009," said Bob Dugan, chief economist for CMHC. "Moving forward, housing starts will moderate as activity becomes more in-line with long term demographic fundamentals. New measures for government-backed mortgage insurance introduced by the Government of Canada that took effect on April 19, 2010 will continue to support the long-term stability of Canada's housing market."

Mr. Dugan also noted that the existing home market will move toward balanced conditions over the next two years as Multiple Listing Service sales ease and inventory levels increase. In late 2009 and early 2010, sales activity included some pent-up demand from early 2009. Once this demand is exhausted, and as mortgage rates gradually rise, the pace of activity in the resale market will ease. As a result, existing home sales will be in the range of 484,000 to 513,300 units in

2010, with a point forecast of 497,300 units, and then move slightly lower in 2011 to be in the range of 443,500 to 504,900 units, with a point forecast of 473,500 units.

With an improved balance between demand and supply, the average MLS® price is expected to stabilize through the end of 2010 and then rise modestly in 2011.

CANADA MORTGAGE
AND HOUSING CORPORATION

Canadian Housing Starts Decrease Moderately in June

The seasonally-adjusted annual rate of housing starts was 189,300 units in June, according to Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC).

Seasonally-adjusted annual rate estimates of housing start activity were also revised up for April and May. This resulted in a month-over-month gain of 3.7 per cent in April (205,900 units), a 5.1 per cent decline in May (195,300 units), and a decrease of 3.1 per cent in June.

"Housing starts decreased during June, largely due to the multiple starts segment in Ontario. The single starts segment was largely unchanged Canada-wide," said Bob Dugan, chief economist at CMHC's Market Analysis Centre. "After a robust start to 2010, we expect the pace of housing start activity to moderate and total 182,000 units by year-end."

The seasonally-adjusted annual rate of urban starts decreased by 2.6 per cent to 167,000 units in June. Urban multiple starts decreased by



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5.8 per cent to 89,200 units, while single urban starts edged higher by 1.4 per cent to 77,800 units.

June's seasonally adjusted annual rate of urban starts decreased 19.8 per cent in Atlantic Canada and 17.4 per cent in Ontario. Urban starts increased 11.6 per cent in Quebec, 8.6 per cent in the Prairie Region, and 6.3 per cent in British Columbia.

Rural starts were estimated at a seasonally adjusted annual rate of 22,300 units in June.

CANADA MORTGAGE
AND HOUSING CORPORATION

Saskatchewan Housing Front Leads the Nation

New housing starts in Saskatchewan cities are up considerably according to a

report released by Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) in June.

Saskatchewan's urban housing starts were up 63 per cent in May 2010 when compared with last May, the third highest percentage increase among the provinces.

In the first five months of 2010, urban housing starts in the province were up by 140 per cent when compared with the same period last year. Saskatchewan ranked first among the provinces during this time period.

Saskatoon new housing starts improved by 251 per cent in the first five months of 2010 over the same period in 2009, while Regina starts jumped 95 per cent.

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Saskatchewan Building Permit Increases Highest in the Nation

Good news on the building front in March of this year according to a report released by Statistics Canada in May. Saskatchewan's building permits increased by 65.1 per cent (seasonally-adjusted) between February 2010 and March 2010 - the highest percentage increase in Canada. Residential permits were up 64.3 per cent and non-residential permits increased by 66.3 per cent over the same period.

"This is a substantial increase in construction that confirms Saskatchewan's economy is doing very well

when compared with other provinces," enterprise minister Ken Cheveldayoff said. "Construction activity is a good indication of consumer and business confidence, and an important measure of economic growth."

Building permits in the province increased by 73.4 per cent in March 2010 when compared with March 2009, the third highest increase among the provinces (seasonally-adjusted).

The Saskatoon Census Metropolitan Area (CMA) saw an increase of 80.5 per cent in building permit values between March 2009 and March 2010, while the Regina CMA had an increase of 85.3 per cent in this period (seasonally-adjusted).

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Pleasant Hill Update: Kubica Property Demolished

The former dwelling and shop of Kubica Glassworks was demolished June 29.

This is the final piece of property acquired to complete the Pleasant Hill Village project. The City began acquiring property in Pleasant Hill in 2007.

The demolition is another step closer to assembling a development site for K.C. Charities Inc.

K.C. Charities intends to construct a 75 unit seniors' housing complex on this site, known as 'Parcel E' in the re-development plan. Plans are to begin construction in late summer 2010.

*PLEASANT HILL BLOG,
CITY OF SASKATOON*

Pleasant Hill Update: Parkview Green Launched

On June 17, the Affordable New Home Development Foundation and the Pleasant Hill Ventures Corp. launched the first new units in the Pleasant Hill Village project. Cabinet minister Donna Harpauer, Saskatoon city councillor Pat Lorje, Alan Thomarat from the Home Builders Association and Keith Hanson from the Affordable New Home Development Foundation provided a large gathering with an overview to launch this significant project.

Located at 1505 and 1507 19th Street West, the project is the result of a joint venture between professional home

builders - River Ridge Homes and Ehrenburg Homes. Twenty-four family-oriented units with energy saving features and high quality construction are now available.

This was a pioneering effort to bring spacious, bright and affordable new home construction to Pleasant Hill. The units are available to the general public and affordably priced between \$189,900 and \$240,000. Financial assistance is available to those homebuyers who earn less than \$52,000 per year.

*PLEASANT HILL BLOG,
CITY OF SASKATOON*

Governments of Canada and Saskatchewan Celebrate New Affordable Housing in Saskatoon

National and provincial support for two Saskatoon housing initiatives built for low-income families and persons with disabilities was announced June 24.

Funding in the amount of just over \$600,000 for the DH2 Construction project has been made available for the initiative through Canada's Economic Action Plan, the federal government's plan to stimulate the economy and create jobs during the global recession. The second project, Bedford Road, received \$1.8 million through the Affordable Housing Initiative. The federal and provincial governments are contributing equally to this overall investment of \$148 million under the amended Canada-Saskatchewan Affordable Housing Program Agreement.



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The DH2 project consists of two three-bedroom semi-detached homes, for a total of four units. Each unit is wheelchair-accessible and features wider doorways, ramps, wheel-in showers and lower counter and light-switch heights. The estimated total cost is \$1.1 million, of

which more than \$600,000 was funded by the federal and provincial governments, with a further \$72,800 from the City of Saskatoon. A private incorporation known as DH2 Construction provided the remaining funding in land and financing for the construction of the project.

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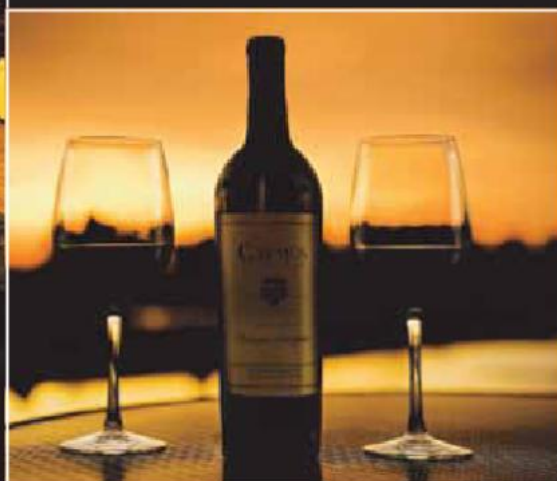


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The Bedford Road project consists of two three-bedroom four-plexes, for a total of eight units. The estimated total cost is about \$1.9 million, with \$1.8 million in federal and provincial funding and the balance coming from the City of Saskatoon.

GOVERNMENT OF
SASKATCHEWAN

Residential Home Sales Soften in July

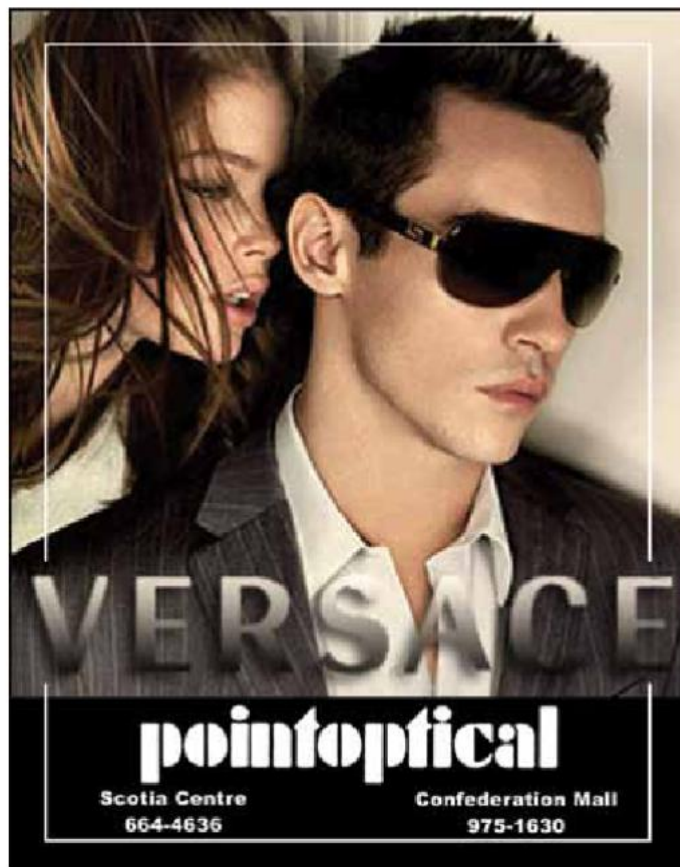
Home buying activity in Saskatoon was down 18 per cent in July, with 357 homes sold, compared with 438 in July, 2009. Year to date unit sales declined four per cent, with 2,217 homes sold compared with 2,304 in 2009.

The majority of the sales activity remained in the \$300,000 to \$350,000 price range.

The average selling price of \$289,715 was two per cent higher than July 2009, when the average was \$283,531. Year to date the average selling price is \$290,515, up five per cent from \$277,490 in 2009. In July it took 39 days on average to sell a home.

Home buyers had 1,334 properties to select from at the end of July. Inventory levels dropped seven per cent from June, when 1,412 homes were on the market. Year to date listing numbers are on par with 2009 with 4,389 having been listed for sale.

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PROFILE

They Call Him the Rock Man

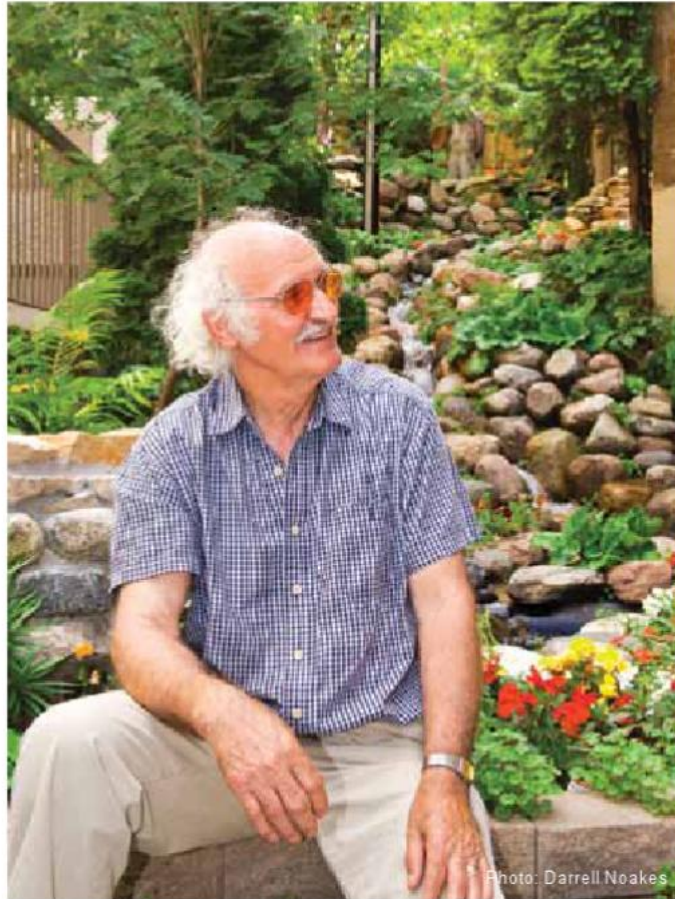
Joe Laturnus Creates Saskatoon's Rivers of Stone

Everyone calls him the Rockman. When Joe Laturnus and his wife moved into their Saskatchewan Crescent condominium in 1993, Joe talked the property board into letting him build a rock garden.

The refreshing garden tucked into the riverbank between two condominium developments didn't always look that way. When the couple moved in, the space was mostly Canada thistle, growing three and four feet tall, Joe says. There was also a pile of hardened concrete, dumped down the slopes to get rid of it at the end of construction.

"The first thing I had to do was haul tons of that concrete out," he says. "Then I hauled in dirt and rocks."

The garden is a cool oasis of plants poking up between sloping walls of rocks, divided into four terraces stepping up the hillside as far as the back lane, about 200 feet away. A cascading creek and waterfalls wind their way down channels, filling a pond at the bottom, just outside the couple's side door. Sitting by the trickling water, in the shade of the foliage, surrounded by the scent of so many plants, you'd never think you were only steps away from a busy city street.



Joe "The Rockman" Laturnus and his Saskatchewan Crescent rock garden. Now, approaching 80, the former public servant has built a following for his rock work.

When the rock garden began turning heads in the neighbourhood, someone suggested taking on the yards of two 11th Street homes that overlooked his property. Now, those yards contain terraced gardens, patios and pathways.

Pointing at one yard, Joe says: "You can't see it from here, but the stairs go up and around there, split off and go another two levels. Where those coloured trees are,

there's a ten-foot-wide by ten-foot-tall waterfall."

Walking down 11th Street, then Victoria Avenue, Joe points out more rock gardens and a dry creek, defined in large rocks and lined with trees, shrubs and smaller plants and flowers.

"That's all Joe," he says.

To the west, stately homes on Saskatchewan Crescent and Poplar Crescent showcase Joe's talents. One of those fea-

tures a tall waterfall cascading into a private swimming pool, designed to mask the wall of the garage. Secret gardens of rock, Joe's rocks, appear throughout Saskatoon. Some are in more public locations, such as those adorning Earl's Restaurant.

It's as if there is a river of rocks flowing through Saskatoon.

Joe emphasizes that his rocks aren't a business, they're a pastime. He retired from the federal public service 23 years ago and now, approaching age 80, he doesn't need more work. It's just that retirement left him with time on his hands, and the rocks give him something to do.

"When I got here, I was fit to be tied," Joe says. "When I worked with the department, I was a construction supervisor; about 50 per cent of my time was spent in the field. When I retired and began spending all my time at home, my wife says, 'Why don't you go do something?'"

"I've always liked rocks," Joe says.

Cornie Janzen, at Janzen's Excavating in Martensville, who supplied all Joe's rocks, gave him the nickname "the Rock Man."

"He would tell people, 'I'm too busy. I'm working for the Rock Man,'" Joe says. "That's all I ever wanted. All his other customers — they get gravel, they want sand. This guy just wants rocks."

DARRELL NOAKES



Standing (left to right) - Gerri Millard, Lori Krogan, Kristi Knippel, Marlene Miller, Greg Graves, Pinky Nundy, Claire Clark, Geoff Rathgaber, Lori Hope, Peggy Jodrey. Sitting (left to right) - Jodi Nixon, Kevin Nguyen, Dannon Herr, Greg Jensen, Michelle Olsen.

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SECURITY

Common Sense for Safety Tips You Can Take to Keep Your Home Secure

Technology has changed the face of home security. With the advent of such devices as web cams, motion-detecting lights and wireless sensors, costs have been reduced and safety has increased for protecting your home, loved ones and precious belongings.

Not all home security measures, however, have to involve the wizardry of hi-tech. There are a lot of common sense things you can do yourself to protect your family and your residence, whether you're home or not.

You might want to play "burglar"-- inspect carefully around your house to see where someone might break in. Are your windows locked and doors intruder-proof?

Mark and photograph your property for identification. Paint the handles of your tools to keep them from being stolen. Thieves don't like to steal items that are easy to identify. The simple, though conspicuous, placement of signage indicating that your home is protected by a national, or local, security company can take your home off a criminal's "to do" list. Criminals are not likely to attempt to invade a home that is announcing its defense system.

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your mailbox or your entry in the telephone book. Only use your initial and your last name.

Removing high hedges, bushes or fences from around your home where break and enter artists can hide on your property can eliminate theft opportunities.

If the entrances to your home are dark, consider installing lighting with an infrared detector. Most thieves don't want to be observed trying to get in a door.

Many front doors can be kicked in, so ensure you have a solid door and a strong dead bolt.

Having a dog that barks is one of the easiest means of securing your home, according to experts, as thieves do not like noise drawing attention to their intentions.

Introduce yourself to your

neighbours and be on good terms with them. They can watch your home and you can watch theirs when either of you are away. Share information about any suspicious people, activities or vehicles in the neighbourhood.

Consider becoming involved with the Saskatoon Community Watch Program or Crime Stoppers (see the sidebar). Both of these organizations are committed to helping to keep people, property, homes and neighbourhoods safe.

When You're Home

Yes, intruders break into your home, even when you're there--especially at night. Make sure all your windows and doors are securely locked when you go to bed, and the appropriate security systems (if you have them)

and outside lights are on. Have a phone right at your bed side and the right numbers to call if you hear suspicious noises in the house.

It makes sense to be cautious during the daytime as well. When you're home, keep all windows and doors locked and use a dead bolt to lock your front door.

You should be very cautious before you let anyone into your home who you do not know. If someone comes to your door asking to use the phone to call a mechanic or the police, keep the door locked and make the call yourself. If a salesperson or "repair person" comes to your door and asks to be let in, ask for them to push their ID under the door. Professional thieves often use this routine to check out what's in people's homes. If you have serious doubts, check with their company before letting them in.

When You're Not Home

Even if you go out for a short time, to the store to get some milk, for example, make sure your home is locked. It's amazing how many people don't do this and not so surprising that many burglars enter through an unlocked door or window. Keep the television or radio on to make it appear someone is home.

Don't do the obvious and leave your spare keys under the front mat, in the mailbox or under a flowerpot on the front porch. These are the first places where burglars are go-



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ing to look. Wrap it in foil or put it in a 35 mm film can and bury it where you can find it.

If you must turn over your key to a professional house cleaner, make sure to check out their references thoroughly. If they come from a company, check it out with the Better Business Bureau.

Don't leave notes for service people, family or friends on the front door when you are gone. These are advertisements for someone to break into your home.

When You're Away for a Longer Stay

Don't advertise in any recorded form that you're on vacation. That means answering machine messages, Facebook and other social media.

However, notify the neighbours you trust that you are gone and leave them an emergency phone number or contact where they can reach you or a friend.

Have neighbours or a good friend check on your home on a regular basis and collect the mail and newspapers so they don't pile up. If your stay away is for an extended period of time, have someone come and mow the lawn and take care of the yard.

Who You Should Call

According to the Saskatoon Police Service, these are your need-to-know phone numbers:

- If you see a crime in progress call 9-1-1.
- To report a crime that is over with or not emergent call 306-975-8300.
- To anonymously report information to the police call Crime Stoppers at 306-975-TIPS.

RAND ZACHARIAS

Community Watch and Crime Stoppers



Community Watch a partnership between the Saskatoon Police Service and communities, encourages you to be involved in the dissemination and acquisition of crime-related information.

Sign up for the Community Watch program and receive bulletins by calling Constable Rolanda McAvoyn at 306-975-2265 or email communitywatch@police.saskatoon-sk.ca.

You can obtain a Community Watch sticker that you can put on your door to deter burglars and show your neighbourhood's commitment to crime prevention.

You can further protect the security of your neighbourhood and home by sharing information you receive through the Community Watch network with anyone you feel may benefit for it.

Visit the website to find out the areas served by Community Watch.

www.police.saskatoon.sk.ca/index.php?loc=programs/community_watch.php

Crime Stoppers is another way you can participate to stop crime to your home and your neighbourhood. Saskatoon Crime Stoppers is part of an international organization of volunteers.

The purpose of Crime Stoppers is to provide a trust worthy and cost-effective method for citizens to easily and anonymously assist the police and other authorities in solving and reducing crime in our communities.

For more information, including how to submit a tip, visit Saskatoon Crime Stoppers at www.saskatooncrimestoppers.com



Towards A Vibrant Downtown Saskatoon:

That Means Attracting
10,000 People to Live There!!!!

As Saskatoon sets its sights on becoming a city of half a million people, a strong, healthy, vibrant downtown contributes to the success of all the communities that make up our city. For downtown to reach its full potential, our council and planners have set a goal to have 10,000 people living in the central core, an area bounded by Idylwyld Drive on the west, 25th Street on the north and the river on the south and east.

BY SASKATOON MAYOR DON ATCHISON

Persephone Theatre
and the Rемаi Arts
Centre provide cultural
experiences downtown.

Photos: Darrell Noakes



Kiwanis Park, with the distinctive Vimy Memorial Bandstand, south of the Delta Bessborough hotel, has long been a popular lunchtime destination. Saskatoon's downtown residents can choose from a variety of parks, open spaces and even semi-wilderness, all within a few minutes walk from home.

As the city grows to half a million and, into the future, a million people, those boundaries will stretch out a little further as well.

We need our downtown to have a residential population, and for that population to make up a substantial portion of our downtown. It should be a community unto itself, the same as we desire for Stonebridge, Rosewood or any other community in Saskatoon. With more people living downtown, the area becomes safer and friendlier for those already there, and it becomes a place that people want to be.

But it's not just a place to live. Ground-level retail keeps the street alive, providing the services that residents, workers and visitors need. Office space above supports work for those commuting downtown, as well as for residents. Condominiums filling upper floors open the expansive views of the city that urban dwellers value so highly. Mixed-use buildings are ideally suited to downtown living.

Retail at street level makes sure you have people coming from all over the city. You have people coming and going all the time, in and out, all that hustle and bustle. But you need to have residential, too.

The more people you get on the street, the healthier it is.

Look at all the major centres that have just encouraged office buildings. Sure, they're busy Monday through Friday, nine to five. But after five o'clock in the afternoon and on the weekends, you're hard pressed to find a soul on the street. Our downtown will be animated, all day, every day.

Our residential downtown population has swelled from fewer than 1,200 a decade ago to more than 3,000 currently, and we're seeing a renewed vitality of the area. Our downtown is not deserted space after hours. There's a mixture of children, young adults, adults and seniors, all living within walking distance of the river, live theatre, cinemas, shopping and work. There are business people during the day, who stay into the evening. Tourists come to our downtown.

I am constantly meeting people visiting the city, who ask why our downtown is so unbelievably busy, even at night. They wonder what event could attract such crowds. I reply that it's just a normal evening in our downtown.

It's thriving now. Imagine how it will look with 10,000 people living there.

The boundaries between downtown and other neighbourhoods will vanish. Caswell Hill, Riversdale, City Park and Nutana will be a seamless, comfortable walk, each providing its own amenities to complement the growing array of services downtown, with a welcoming transition from one community to another.

A vibrant downtown permeates the entire city. It's important for our downtown to remain the centre of the city. You need a healthy downtown.



A Tale of Two Homes II

How to Manage Murphy's Law While Creating a Dream House

Part Two of a Three-Part Series

Last issue, Saskatoon Home published the first of a trio of articles documenting the steps two couples took in the quest to create their ideal abodes. Both wanted to live in their old neighbourhoods but wanted to be more creative than just buying new houses. Greg and Nina Moe bought an older home and renovated it. Darla Tenold and Fahmy Bekhit bought and demolished a house to clear the way for a new in-fill.

The first article described how the two couples looked for and found the unique solutions to their housing quests in the way that best suited their personal lifestyles, budgets and personalities. They found and purchased the right properties and found the right people to do the job.

Murphy's Law states: "Anything that can go wrong, will go wrong." In this second installment of the series, both couples encounter surprises and challenges along the way and learn how to deal with them in a calm and positive manner...with the knowledgeable help and assurance from their contractors, of course.

GAIL JANSEN

Nina and Greg Moe:

Staying Sane Through Surprises

While a home inspection is an important part of buying any new home [see sidebar, page 27] having one doesn't always protect you from hidden unknowns.

"We had a large crack in the foundation of the home we bought to renovate that ran all the way across the basement," says Nina Moe.

"It was something that would never have been found in our home inspection. There was drywall over it – and on top of that there was wood paneling so no one would have ever found it – but if you uncover it and you know it's there, you have to fix it, you can't just leave it there."

This was an unexpected cost that hadn't been factored into the budget the couple had set for their contracted renovation. Nina says it's since been repaired in a "first class" manner, for a relatively minimal cost, and now they probably have the strongest wall in the neighbourhood.

"If there's ever a tornado in the neighbourhood," jokes Nina. "People should probably come and hide here."

Repairing the crack in the foundation of their home was the largest of a handful of hurdles and challenges that the Moes had to face during their renovation process. They also faced replacing all of the electrical wiring and plumbing in the home to accommodate the latest technologies, and also structural beams that had been removed in a previous renovation.

"When it comes right down to it," reasons Nina. "If you're going to be taking everything out, you might as well just put everything new in and then at least you know what you have and what you're dealing with."

"Besides," laughs Nina. "Part of the excitement and interesting part of a demolition, was just tearing everything apart and finding all of the surprises."



Photos: Jessica Storozuk

Nina and Greg Moe kept their spirits up through their renovation because they knew the final result would be worth it.

Trust in the Experts

For the Moes, the number one thing that kept their sanity intact when faced with their unknown challenges was the confidence they had in their contractor.

"We heard horror story after horror story of people going through renovations," says Nina. "And we have never ever experienced any of that. They were very committed to us and to making sure the project got done properly, so we never had an ounce of doubt."

"Whenever a little bump would come up," says Nina. "They would just tell us they wanted to talk to us. It never seemed like a panic or something you needed to be really stressed about. They'd just say: 'we found something here and we know the kind of home you guys want, so this is what we need to do to fix it.'"

Always Look on the Bright Side

While others would look at the constant flow of "surprises" that come with renovating a home as a source of stress, for Nina and Greg, the excitement of seeing the project come together easily outweighed any stress they felt.

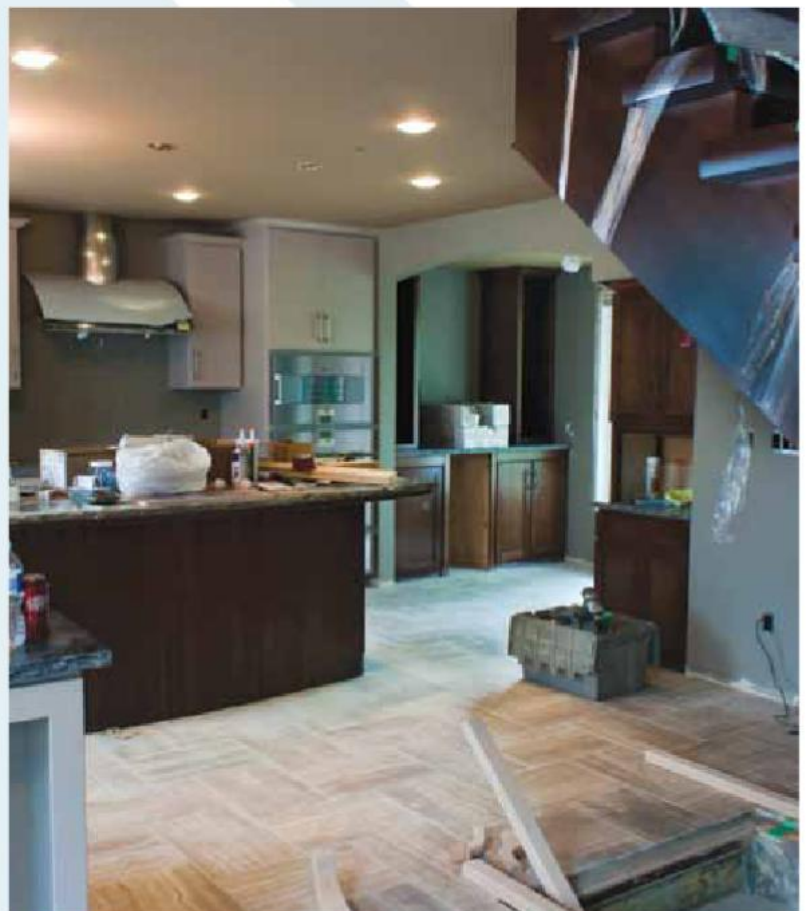
"We have people coming up to us all the time saying: 'You must be so stressed, you must be so worried, how is it going?' And we keep saying: 'Great!'"

"It's really going awesome and we are so excited all the time about it. If things run a couple of weeks late, really it's only been a couple of months of work, and we're going to be in it in a few weeks.

I mean we hear horror stories about people waiting six months or years to get into their places. Or of contractors just up and leaving, so...compared to that we've had it easy."



The Moes replaced all the electrical wiring and plumbing in the home to accommodate the latest technologies.



The pleasing results start to emerge as the renovation proceeds.

Darla Tenold and Fahmy Bekhit:

Dealing with Discoveries

The many surprises that the Moes faced were not an issue for Darla Tenold and Fahmy Bekhit. Having decided to build an in-fill, the problems inherent with the existing house on the lot were quickly put to rest with a bulldozer. But that didn't mean they didn't have their own share of unexpected hurdles.

"For us," says Fahmy, "one of the most stressful things was bank approval. We had designed a plan for the building of the house, but when we went for our financing we found that the bank had their own plan."

Unbeknownst to the couple prior to their building experience, financing for an in-fill home isn't based on the value of the items contained in the home's blueprint and finishes, or on the ability of an individual to afford them, but rather on the appraised market value that exists in the neighbourhood.

"So let's say our blueprint and all our finishings added up to \$10,000," explains Darla, "and the bank looks at it and says no house has ever sold in that area higher than \$8,000. We still could have built our \$10,000 house, but the bank wouldn't have financed us for the difference. That would have had to be cash from our own pockets."

Originally thinking they would have to change their blueprint, with some timely help from their builder, the couple were able to keep their original plan, and chose instead to head back to the drawing board and scale back on some of their finishings to save on costs. The first things to go were their plans for a fully-developed basement.

Other changes the couple made included: scaling back to a mid-ranged hardwood; adding carpet to areas instead of hardwood; limiting the stone countertops they had first envisioned; and substituting vinyl siding for the Hardy Board siding they had originally planned, saving the more expensive Hardy Board siding for the home's trim. Both say this turned out very well.

"We give Cathy [Edwards] credit for that because she was giving us tips on what we needed to pare down, or what we needed to change," says Fahmy.

"When you're investing the money in building a new home, there are certain things that only make sense to do at the time that you're building," explains Cathy. "So those were some of the items that we looked at."

Co-owner and operator of Sanoma Homes Ltd., along with husband Marty, Cathy says that using their combined renovation and real estate experience, along with their home building expertise, is what helped them to develop a keen eye and knowledge of what features would bring true value-added quality to the couple's bottom line.



Photo: Courtesy of Darla and Fahmy

With help from their builder, Tenold and Bekhit made changes to satisfy the bank's requirements for financing.



Photo: Jessica Storozyuk

The striking home is on its way to being completed.

"That's always the dichotomy with building a truly custom home," explains Cathy. "You want it to be diverse and unique enough to be a true reflection of the client's own personal style, but at the same time ensure that at the end of the day they will still have a very marketable product."

Trust in the Experts

"Having a builder that you trust and that you know has this kind of experience is really important," stresses Darla. "So when you do come up against a hurdle like ours, you trust that they will really help you to narrow down and focus on what the things are that are really important to you...what you want to have in the house and what you're willing to let go of or change later on."

"You have to have full trust in your builder," agrees Fahmy. "That doesn't mean that you don't pay attention to the details. We have full trust in our builder, but we pay attention and we're quick to bring something to their attention and question things too."

In addition to the contractor providing calm, reassurance when things get tough, both couples also say that good communication and availability also builds a strong relationship that helps weather the uncertain periods.

"If you have questions about things," says Darla. "You have to know that you can get in contact with them easily and that they'll respond quickly."

Always Look on the Bright Side

Building their new home has been an experience filled with a myriad of decisions and the occasional hurdle, but Darla says Fahmy's own positive outlook on the whole experience has done wonders to help her stay on track, focused on the bigger picture...the fact that in the end they'll have the home of their dreams.

"The way I look at it is this," says Fahmy. "If this house was for sale, and we were looking at it for the first time, we would say that it was a great house – our perfect house. And at the end of the day we know we've got a house that we're going to love."

As both couples head for the finish line and the final dusty drywall days of their respective projects, their excitement is palpable and expectations are high. The workload has at times been immense, and at other times frustrating, but has it all been worth it? In our final reveal in the winter issue of Saskatoon Home, we'll get a glimpse of the couple's finished dream homes and learn with the benefit of hindsight where they might have done things differently.

GAIL JANSEN



The couple were very pleased as their new kitchen starts to take shape. Photo: Jessica Storozuk

Home Inspection Provides Need-to-Know Before You Do A Reno

Home inspector Hugh Pinneault of All in One Inspection Ltd. says there are certain things to look for when searching for a suitable candidate for a renovation.

- **Foundation:** Look for any major cracks. This is a warning that the house is unsettled and the foundation needs to be redone.
- **Flooring:** Look for any bumps or rolls both on the surface and underneath. An uneven floor could indicate that there is a problem with the foundation or that the house is moving.
- **Attic:** Look to see if trusses are black or if there is mould. A symptom of moisture in the attic.
- **Electrical:** Turn lights on and off. If sparks can be seen it could mean aluminum wiring that would need to be replaced.
- **Plumbing:** Open and close the taps and listen for noise, a warning sign that could indicate loose pipes or pressure that is too high, which could lead to leaks down the road.

"Basically," says Pinneault, "looking at a home is essentially like looking at a car. If you have a car that is all rusted, you wouldn't spend a whole lot of money on the engine. A house is the same thing. If the home does not pass those first simple tests then it's probably not worth looking at it further for renovations. "Though," adds Pinneault, "it could still be a candidate for a tear down."



Visit www.saskatoon-home.ca/extras.htm

- to see the first part of this story and exclusive photos.
- to hear two of Saskatoon's prominent real estate agents tell you what to look for when searching for a home that is a candidate for a renovation or in-fill.

THE EXPERTS RATE SASKATOON AS A RESIDENT- FRIENDLY CITY

There's no doubt...people like living in Saskatoon and the city likes the people who live in it. Saskatoon does a lot to improve the quality of life for its inhabitants and plans to do even more to attract and accommodate an even bigger population. Saskatoon Home invited four observant, experienced, in-the-know panelists to share their opinions on everything from what the city does well for its citizens to the styles of homes that are trending right now. They also dish on the neighbourhoods they like for a variety of reasons...it's really interesting to see what they have to say. Compare your favourites to theirs!



Participants



Derek Kindrachuk, born and raised in Saskatoon, MA Architecture, University of Manitoba, became a registered architect in 1988 and co-founded Kindrachuk Agrey Architecture. His commitment to architectural responsiveness through blending art, building science and engineering is evidenced in his portfolio of project types, including: schools, libraries, and various commercial buildings, to work on the University of Saskatchewan campus, the Mendel Art Gallery, and the Saskatoon Air Terminal Building. He's had numerous appointments and involvements ranging from Saskatoon's Urban Design Committee and Municipal Heritage Advisory Committee to past Councillor/Secretary-Treasurer of The Saskatchewan Association of Architects.



Wally Mah, with his partner, Julius Calyniuk, founded North Ridge Development Corporation in 1981. North Ridge has become one of the largest privately-owned single family homebuilder/developers in Saskatchewan. As president, Mah is committed to the province of Saskatchewan, as the company has offices in Saskatoon and Regina and has currently started building houses in Prince Albert. North Ridge's primary business is the construction of multiple unit condominium development and residential housing. Wally has always been dedicated to developing communities and providing homes for families. Married with two sons, he has continued to dedicate his time to helping the community through his involvement with various charitable and sports organizations.



Jeff Montgomery is a third generation Saskatoonian with strong links to the city. "Having had good experiences and made many friends throughout elementary, high school and university strengthened those bonds. Short stints in the lands of plenty and a bit of traipsing around the world reinforced that the Hub city was the place to be." Married, he has four children with kids of their own. "A successful career in a province-wide service industry makes semi-retirement a time to relish with a little insurance broking, the occasional construction project, continued volunteerism and enjoying our own back yard."



Ron Olson has been involved in Saskatchewan business enterprises since the early 70s, following graduation from the University of Saskatchewan. Early in his business career, Ron became involved in leadership at the corporate level and in industry organizations. As general manager of Boychuk Companies, he has been involved in the development of Saskatoon for over 30 years, both in land assembly and development as well as construction. He has been involved in the planning and development of many neighbourhoods in Saskatoon; the most recent is Rosewood. He served as president of the Saskatoon Real Estate Board and provincial Real Estate Board in the early 80s. He was president of the Saskatoon Home Builders and provincial Home Builders' Board in the 90s. His other involvements, including organizations on a national level, are too numerous to mention here.

Do you think Saskatoon is a resident-friendly city, doing the best it can to make living here comfortable, affordable, amenity and service-friendly, safe and convenient?

Kindrachuk: Over the last decade, and even more so during the last handful of years, Saskatoon has experienced significant growth and we know is now being seen by many as a place of real opportunity, and a place to come back to. Newcomers are amazed at the quality of life, the affordability, and the amenities and resources that make it attractive, with many residents feeling that our "well-kept secret" is now been discovered. The beauty of our natural landscape, of which the riverbank is the most obvious and cherished, is benefiting from the weather this year and its lushness is truly magnificent. Commercialization is growing rapidly in response to market and service demands, convenience expectations, and neighbourhood growth. The recent growth did impact affordability which was experienced by many in the supply and demand of the housing sector as an example, with the market now self-adjusting. Our economic diversity has allowed Saskatoon to less severely feel the apparent effects of the world-wide economic downturn, enabling most to maintain a good quality of life.

Mah: Absolutely.

Montgomery: There are many aspects to this question that could take an entire magazine to answer. Suffice it to say that Saskatoon is a people place. There are many opportunities to enjoy the city, summer and winter, regardless of income. Most people feel comfortable on the street and are able to get around. Certainly there is room for improvement...accessibility, for example. Transportation systems take money and a commitment of the populace to make use of them. Awareness is always an issue. If we all knew everything that was at hand, I am sure we would all be astounded at what is available.

Olson: Essentially, the answer is that Saskatoon is doing a good job in each of these categories. Do it better? The answer is yes. In regards to amenities, safety, convenience and comfort, the city would be rated as good. However, in regards to affordability, the city over all would rate a lower grade. While the city supports and provides programs to promote affordable housing projects, the real rising cost of fees, levies and charges on new home construction is very high, negating any other efforts at making homes affordable in Saskatoon. The policy of "growth must pay for growth" is at the centre of the problem.

What are some of the most appealing things about Saskatoon as a city in which to live?

Kindrachuk: The manageable size of the city and the cherished and protected natural environment that is threaded through it in various forms. The spirit of the people – there is something about the prairie spirit that exhibits itself through our pride, collective civic culture, entrepreneurship, and integrity that is recognized by others.

Mah: The University of Saskatchewan campus is gorgeous. Saskatoon is fortunate to have the Western Development Museum, the Saskatoon Forestry Farm Park & Zoo and Wanuskewin Heritage Park. The Meewasin Valley Trail has 21 kilometres of riverbank trails that wind through the heart of the city. The Canadian Light Source Synchrotron is one of only six in the world! There are over 300 acres of breathtaking riverbank parks here and we possess the best air and water quality in Canada. The city's people are big on volunteerism. Saskatoon is recognized as one of the best places to live in Canada, combining big city amenities with small town hospitality.

Montgomery: The availability of arts and entertainment, sports for participation or spectating, recreation facilities, libraries and the relative ease to get to venues around the city make Saskatoon unique, given the quality and regularity

of these opportunities. The location of the city, although isolated from a global perspective, is situated on a beautiful setting, the South Saskatchewan River being the obvious number one feature.

Olson: Saskatoon is appealing as a place to live in many respects including: good parks and recreation facilities, good maintenance of infrastructure, excellent schools, good policing, cleanliness as a city, reasonable property taxes and general good management.

Which Saskatoon neighbourhood do you consider to be really interesting from an architectural point of view and why?

Kindrachuk: The charm and density of Nutana is hard to beat – whether original maintained or restored homes, or infill sensitive to the overall housing character, maturity and scale, create a comfortable sense of place with urban convenience. Single-family homes co-exist with higher density neighbours in a manner that does feel contrived, as the area has evolved over time. There is rich character and individualism with almost no room for homogeneity, and certainly no demand for architectural controls. The car is evident, but has not taken over as the face of the neighbourhood is each individual home with its distinct contribution to each block and street.

Mah: Saskatchewan Crescent. There is a mixture of grandiose homes ranging from traditional to modern designs - luxury lifestyle, complimented by stunning views of the South Saskatchewan River and close to Gabriel Dumont Park.

Montgomery: City Park is a fabulous area with a wide variety of lot sizes, shapes and aspects. The buildings that have been constructed there in the last hundred years are extremely varied, including all architectural styles that exist in Saskatoon. There is commercial space to provide some services but the proximity to the continually improving downtown and the river make the neighborhood great.



Photo: Dattrell Noakes

Skyline of downtown Saskatoon, including the Delta Bessborough and Ramada Renaissance Hotels, as seen from the Meewasin Trail across the river.

Olson: The area along the river bank, both east and west, is perhaps the most interesting from an architectural point of view. Many of these homes were constructed just after the turn of the century during a prosperous period of high growth in the city's history. Many homes are architecturally-designed, creating a great deal of variation and unique look to the exterior and interior. These houses have, for the most part, been well-maintained. Renovations tend to preserve the original look of the home.

Which Saskatoon neighbourhood do you think is most appealing to live in and why?

Kindrachuk: In my case, the apple did not fall far from the tree, as having grown up in Greystone Heights and now having raised a family there with my wife, it is hard to think of other neighbourhoods as more appealing. The scale of the neighbourhood is small by today's standards. The homes are individual with rarely any kind of physical or aesthetic repetitiveness. Its proximity to amenities whether commercial, educational, or leisure is opportune – within reasonable distance by foot or bicycle.

Mah: River Heights for its big lots, open green space, walking trails and the fact that it borders on the South Saskatchewan River bank.

Montgomery: Nutana has it all. A mix of single family, large and small, condo, low and high, apartments. Proximity to great clubs, restaurants, shops and services. The river and parks along its banks. The pace. The tricky bit for someone moving in is to find a house for a reasonable price.

Olson: Briarwood, located on the southeast edge of the city, is perhaps the most appealing residential neighbourhood. It contains some of the largest single family houses in the city with the greatest range and complexity of designs both interior and exterior. It has a man-made lake along with a well-appointed central park system. The collector streets [connecting the residential streets with arterial route] running through the subdivision have no houses directly fronting on them, only backing. Streets were carefully laid out to disperse traffic, avoiding high traffic flows on one street. The entire subdivision is surrounded by a masonry-designed theme fence, including the collector streets and all lots flanking them. Major entrances to the neighbourhood are wide, landscaped, with a masonry sign identifying Briarwood. This neighbourhood also has the largest number of single family houses constructed with "walk out" basements.

The lake and the park areas largely have walk-outs backing these areas, affording not only access to the park but providing amazing vistas for the homeowners.

What are the most up-and-coming popular Saskatoon neighbourhoods and why?

Kindrachuk: Willowgrove and Rosewood with their variety of housing types and forms have created exciting new suburban neighbourhoods. Hampton Village has taken off due to its unique layout, housing mix, and affordability. Willows provides a unique living opportunity intertwined through the built green space of the golf course which is unique in Saskatoon. Westmount and Caswell Hill are two character neighbourhoods that have been well-kept secrets and are now seeing some community planning attention. They provide real opportunity relative to supporting the demand for densification near the city centre. The 'cultural corridor' that links the Business Improvement Districts of Broadway, downtown (River Landing) and Riversdale, with the adjacency of the riverbank amenity, provides unique opportunity for the Riversdale neighbourhood to rejuvenate by means of existing housing upgrades, sensitive infill, and densification.

Mah: Stonebridge Subdivision features strong locational advantages that appeal to potential residents. It's primarily residential community located south of Circle Drive (Saskatchewan Highway 16 and 11). A big box commercial area is developed on the northwest corner of the community including a Walmart, Home Depot and numerous other retail stores. Nearby amenities include the Willows Golf & Country Club and Saskatoon Auto Mall. As a result of increased traffic south of Circle Drive, the Clarence Avenue and Circle Drive interchange was constructed providing an arterial roadway overpass of Clarence Ave. over Circle Drive. Long term plans call for another road to be constructed as a new access road into the eastern half of Stonebridge. The subdivision has a new and innovative approach to suburban design, offering a diverse mix of land uses and wide range of housing choices. Architectural guidelines promote a consistent quality and design theme. Enhance entrance treatments provide a strong sense of arrival and attractive visual backdrop. The roads are laid out in a court system styling. There is an open space system integrating more than 208 acres of park, perimeter buffer and ponds, wetlands. The commercial/business service area provides alternatives for business location and opportunities to live closer to work. The planned layout for the community includes provisions for both public and separate (Catholic) school sites.

Hampton Village is also up-and-coming because it is the first designed neighbourhood of its kind on Saskatoon's west end modelled after the "village" concept. This residential area is constructed around the "village centre" consisting of shops, services and amenities for residential living, with walking trails radiating outward from the central core. This suburb has some detached homes and condominiums. This area offers an extensive park system with approximately 50 acres of green space in two public parks that include walking trails and biking. Although there are presently no schools in the area both school systems offer bus service to nearby communities.

Montgomery: The potential for Riversdale is astounding. With the south downtown development progressing, just being within proximity will allow access to a myriad of activities and events. The riverbank improvements will make the entire distance from the pool to the weir into something very few places in this world can boast. Other amenities such as the Farmers' Market and 20th Street shops and services will make Riversdale the live/work neighborhood of the city. Current affordability makes the area perfect for new home buyers and interesting new construction and renovations will become more apparent in the near future. The variety of homes in the neighborhood make it a potential locale for all family sizes, and for multi unit dwellings.

Olson: The most up-and-coming popular neighbourhoods in Saskatoon would include: Stonebridge in the south, Rosewood in the southeast, the Willows, a golf community in the south, and Hampton Village on the west side. Each of these communities offer a different mix of amenities to home buyers in Saskatoon. Stonebridge offers a full range of housing options plus an exceptional, commercial district within the neighbourhood. Rosewood, Saskatoon's newest subdivision, will also offer all price ranges for home buyers, from high and walk-out building sites to affordable condominium units. The highlight of Rosewood is 65 acres of wetlands easily accessible to all parts of the subdivision. The Willows provides a unique product for home buyers wanting a golfing/green environment. Hampton Village on Saskatoon's west end is emerging as a high quality family-oriented neighbourhood, offering parks, recreation areas, easily accessible to the whole area.

How do you see Saskatoon in 25 years?

Kindrachuk: To think how much Saskatoon has grown over the last 25 years, during which time the economy and housing demand was not as high as it is today, makes it hard to visualize the opportunities the next 25 years will bring. As with all growing cities, Saskatoon will certainly have to deal with

densification in response to managing its environmental footprint and extending the life of our infrastructure, as sprawl is costly on all fronts. The aging population trend will certainly have an impact on responsive housing needs, and at the same time will create opportunity for rejuvenation and infill. I have always maintained a opportunistic outlook for Saskatoon and am excited to live here,

Mah: Saskatoon will continue to be a very prosperous city in which to live with all the natural resources we have, combined with the dedicated, hard working people who live here, always supporting the community and striving to provide a better quality of life for the citizens of Saskatoon.

Montgomery: I see it stretching from Delisle to Walheim to Aberdeen to Dundurn. We prairie folk love our space and the big yard will keep the city expanding. At the same time, there will be higher density inside the city, in Nutana, Riversdale, University and City Park. The city will continue to develop recreation and arts facilities and it will always be one of the best cities on earth to make a home. We are fortunate to have resources and people with ideas and attitude to make this place truly fine without having to seek a lot of attention.

Olson: Saskatoon, in 25 years, will obviously be a much larger city; it continues to be one of the fastest growing cities in Canada. City administrators are presently building a "plan" to take Saskatoon to 400,000 population. This plan will shape much of the city's future growth over the next 25 years. Densification, placing more development and people in less space, is a key component of the plan. Mandating a greater emphasis on "green" neighbourhoods will also be part of the plan. The challenge for the future will be to preserve the good elements of our city, while accommodating population growth. Developers urge a measured approach to the long-term plan, one that includes a full range of housing types for future home owners. It is just as important to provide single family home options on traditional lots, as to provide options for more dense developments such as high-rise construction.



Photo: Courtesy My Virtual Tours

Yes, even condos are going in the million-dollar range, as evidenced in Meridian Development's high-end Broadway Avenue project, Luxe.

The \$1 Million Dollar Price Tag

More Seven-Figure Homes as Saskatoon Evolves

Way back in the olden days, when someone was considering an engagement, there was a convention (conveniently started by a jewelry company) to follow when buying a diamond ring. Three times the purchaser's monthly salary.

KARIN MELBERG SCHWIER



Photo: Courtesy My Virtual Tours

The Luxe show suite is an example of why people are willing to pay top dollar for such residences.

So, too, there was a formula for buying a home: two and half times the buyer's annual salary with 25 per cent down. To think that an ordinary person would buy a house for a million was ludicrous; that was what royalty paid and at that price, it probably came studded with precious stones!

But today, the concept of money is quite different and with an average home price in Saskatoon around \$300,000, the old rules seem pretty dusty. In fact, while it might not be commonplace, the \$1 million home purchase is not that far-fetched any more.

Karl Miller is co-owner of Meridian Developments, the group behind the King George revamping on Second Avenue and the Luxe condominium project on Broadway Avenue. He's familiar with clients who are willing to buy a \$1 million home, but at that price, they want custom treatment.

"I wouldn't say it's a trend, but there are definitely more people these days willing to spend that kind of money on a custom-built home. You won't find many spec homes at that price on the market," he says, "or if you do, they're likely to be on the market for awhile."

Miller, who is in the process of closing a \$1 million property sale just before he spoke to Saskatoon Home in early July, says Meridian has six such condos at that price but all are custom builds for clients. "We're not in the resale market," he explains, "but the kind of people who are buying our properties want to custom build new."

Darrell Bartko of Realty Executives agrees that the \$1 million-and-above price tag that used to be unheard of is now in the realty vocabulary. The market is limited, he says, "but we do list and sell those properties. They're certainly more common now than they were even a few years ago." Today, in the Saskatoon area there are several such properties in that upper end price range through the Multiple Listing Service (MLS).

"There have been sales this year in that price range," he says. "We do get more interest than ever. Of course, people are a little more selective when searching for property in this price range."

Stats Can's new housing price index shows national prices of new homes up 2.9 per cent over last year. But Miller doesn't think that higher construction and materials costs have influenced a big jump in high-end home prices.



Photo: Courtesy Realty Executives

This seven-figure home on Riversedge Lane is lavish, handsome, and shows how much living space can be purchased with "a few dollars more."

"That may be a little bit of a factor," he says, "but it's more to do with the confidence in the Saskatoon and Saskatchewan economy. We're very confident about Saskatoon's future and what we can offer people from around the world who want to live here. When people from somewhere else on the globe come and see what they can get in Saskatoon for that price, it makes it pretty attractive for people who want to live in a very nice home."

Miller says the confidence in the economy also translates into the way in which people are willing to demonstrate their wealth.

"I see a big shift today away from that old mentality of not showing your money. Take a look at the high-end car dealerships that have been added recently like Porsche, Mercedes, and Land Rover. People are willing to spend that money instead of holding it close to their vest. That old farmer mentality of saving everything, of not looking like you had any money, has changed.

"That was the guy you find out was worth \$10 million when he died," Miller laughs, "but lived in the same 1964 bungalow that he bought when he was 20 years old!"

Bartko says the days of the one-owner home for a lifetime are probably over. People are more mobile today due to jobs and lifestyles. He also credits a strong economy with instilling a confidence in people that manifests itself in purchasing decisions.

"We're not the 'have not' province anymore," he says. "It used to be when the farmers had a bad year, we all did. But now, we're on the map." He agrees that Saskatchewan consumers are more likely to spend than to just save. "Because of the economy, people who are doing well are now much less afraid to show that in their home and in the lifestyle they lead."



Photo: Courtesy My Virtual Tours

Luxe homeowners dine in understated elegance.

But who is really writing that kind of seven-figure cheque for a home? According to Miller, the high-end buyer is middle-aged and well-established in a lucrative career. They're someone making more money than they ever have and they want to live in a "nice" property.

"And," Miller adds, "they're not afraid to show their wealth. Not to show it off, but they want a nice home, a nice car."

Bartko says he's seeing a lot more young professionals, empty nesters and people who have done well in business and careers interested in high-end homes. What are they taking a look at? Single family dwellings, acreages, condos, he says, depending on their stage of life, financial situation and lifestyle.

"We're pumped on Saskatoon," says Miller. "We've got lots on the go and we don't see it slowing down any time soon. When people come from some place like Vancouver where the average home price is \$1 million, people get pretty excited about what that will buy them in this market."

KARIN MELBERG SCHWIER



Photos: Kevin Greggair

After the renovation, the kitchen and the dining room were combined with the living room for an open feeling. The previous steel columns in the kitchen were encased in rain glass creating an eye catching focal point in the space.

TRANSFO TO CONDO:

This couple migrated downtown from the 'burbs
and created a wide-open, yet warm urban loft

GAIL JANSEN



The new look of the Desrochers condo is warm, yet modern.



The spacious balcony is ideal for outdoor living and taking in the magnificent view without the maintenance of a yard.

Eight years ago, real estate executive Slade Desrochers, like many young professionals, headed to the suburbs where he built his first home. Professionally decorated with the latest amenities and a yard he had landscaped, it was everything a home should be. Yet something still was missing.

"The lifestyle out there seemed very excluded," says Desrochers. "If we wanted to go to dinner, we would have to drive 20 minutes to get back downtown in order to go to some of our favourite places, which sometimes just took too much out of our day."

Looking for a change, Desrochers and girlfriend Kimberly Diller decided to rethink their housing situation by looking for a condominium located right in the heart of Saskatoon's downtown.

"There wasn't one defining moment where we decided, 'We're sick and tired of the suburbs and we're leaving,'" says Desrochers. "It was more a collective decision, watching downtown and how upbeat everything is here – it just made us want to be right in the thick of it."

Transformation: Condo, In More Ways Than One

"When this place came up for sale," continues Desrochers, about the couple's current urban home, "I just walked and knew instantly: This is it, this is home, we're pulling the trigger. Let's go."

Buying a 2,000 square foot condominium, with an additional 1,000 square feet of balcony for spacious outdoor living, Desrochers says there was really only one problem with their new purchase...the unit itself.

Built in the early 1980s, with a very "stock" interior and with walls partitioning every room, the condo had an aged, enclosed feeling, and despite its amazing view of the river, only the living room had the correct vantage point from which to see it.

"It was a shame to not have the kitchen and dining room combined with the living room into one great room that could look out onto the river," says Desrochers. "So we made the decision to take out all of the partition walls on the front half of the condo and turn it into one great concept."

Deciding that what the condo really needed was a full-on renovation, Desrochers and Diller hired good friend and local interior designer Tamara Bowman to give the condo a more modern look and feel.



The spaciousness of the living room and dining room, combined as a great room, is inviting and relaxing (above left and right).



The bathroom features a raised oval tub, stand-alone shower and contemporary, paired vessel sinks.

The result?

"She did an outstanding job," boasts Desrochers. "She knows this job so well inside and out. Even with me being in the real estate industry and seeing thousands and thousands of homes, I never would have come up with what she provided for us here."

Utilizing natural materials such as travertine marble on all the countertops, wrap-around stone tile on the natural wood-burning fireplace, and hemlock and fir doors to replace the unit's previous ones, Bowman designed a space for the couple that was warm and inviting, instead of dark and enclosed. She did all this despite the design challenge that arose when the kitchen walls came down to reveal 6x6 foot steel columns that housed both the plumbing chases and provided structural support.

Turning a challenge into a feature of the room, Bowman encased the pillars in rain glass and added back lighting to make them stand out in a way that flowed with the home's open and welcome theme.

"You can still see them," says Desrochers, "but she's created such a very well-thought design that they look fantastic."

Bowman retained the unit's original wood-burning fireplace to keep with the design's earthy feel. She also created a unique wrap-around tile ledge and hearth, that in addition to enhancing the fireplace with a unique eye-catching feature, also created a practical place to store wood.

A raised oval tub, stand-alone shower, and contemporary, paired vessel sinks in the unit's feature bathroom carried the unit's modern design without ever losing sight of its natural feeling.

but Saskatoon actually has a lot of property that has extremely large square footage. Our home could accommodate anyone from a bachelor to a family, and we've got everything we could possibly want."

That includes a neighbourhood that Desrochers says is one of the biggest highlights of his new downtown lifestyle.

"Certainly one of the reasons we moved here was to have that neighbourhood feel and that neighbourhood maturity," says Desrochers. "And it's improved our quality of life dramatically."

The couple now walk and bike places instead of driving. A dinner out to a favoured spot only requires only a five-minute walk or two-minute bike ride.

"We've also got the best lawn in the city in Rotary Park just across the street," adds Desrochers. "And the best part about it is, I don't have to cut it."

GAIL JANSEN

DESIGN

Designer and Artist Find Ideal Live/Work Space in Riversdale

When designer Happy Grove and artist Adrian Stimson were looking for space to work from, they found that converting a former commercial building to live/work space fit the bill perfectly.

"We realized that if we added an art studio and an interior design office to our existing mortgage, we were going to pay a lot of money for two of those spaces to somebody else," Grove explains. "We thought: we're starting fresh businesses, we need to keep the costs under control, so how about if we try to do it all in one. Living in Caswell Hill at the time, and being involved in the community here [in Riversdale], we were completely aware of the inner city drive to create more live/work spaces."

Stimson, then artist-in-residence at Mendel Art Gallery, had been renting the main floor of a building on 20th Street West for his art studio and an outreach program for the gallery 3 ½ years ago. Grove and Stimson decided to buy when the 1200-square-foot, two-storey building, which over the years had housed a bakery, a pawn shop and a law office, was put up for sale. They renovated and modernized the upstairs



Photos: Darrell Noakes

Live/work home offices are on the rise in Saskatoon. Happy Grove and Adrian Stimson have turned this former grocery store into a design and art studio.

apartment, joining it with their work spaces below.

"So, for less money than our mortgage on our (former) house five blocks away, we have an art studio, an interior design office and our residence," Grove says.

Grove is quick to point out the advantages that many people find with live/work space.

"I don't have to drive to work," he says. "That's a big advantage. When I left Cal-

gary, I was spending an hour and a half — at least — in the car each day getting to and from work. I think it also speaks to Adrian's style of living, which is living artfully. He lives his work. He can be at work all the time if he wants to be. Living in the space is ideal for our relationship, because we get to see each other. We get the best of it all. We can work hard and be together."

The move also met their needs as they strove to sim-

plify their lives, reducing the amount of clutter around them and allowing them to live in a more compact space, Grove says.

"This is a beautiful neighbourhood," Grove adds. "This neighbourhood is filled with vibrant people. In many ways, we look at this as being the most European neighbourhood of any in the city, in the sense that people are on the street. They don't drive to where they're going. They walk or ride their bikes. There's a lot of pedestrian traffic. That creates social dynamism in the neighbourhood. I know my neighbours. I talk to people I see on the street. There's a really strong social component to it, which I think is what the city is trying to do by encouraging live/work in the inner city. I think it's successful. It happens here naturally."

"The way that we've done it in the past is to fragment communities," Grove says. "We isolate our family units at home, when the front door garage swallows up the car and you never see the family again until they come out to go to school or work. That just isn't the way it is down here. I have lived in all of those different kinds of settings and I love this one."

Randy Pshebylo, executive director of Riversdale Business Improvement District, sees great potential for live/work spaces in the area. The neighbourhood shows how people see a changing rela-



A former bakery, pawn shop and a law office, the updated interior of the Grove-Stimson home is comfortable, impressive and enhances the art work.

tionship between residence and work, he says, in large part because of the influence

of developers such as Curtis Olson, who recently joined the BID board, and business

people like photographer Josie Freeborn.

"There's a new generation of entrepreneurs. I'm dealing with a whole new generation of people showing an interest in the area," Pshebylo says.

"When we look at Avenue C, in the 400 block, for example, across from River Landing, we're seeing that transitional zoning, the new MX [mixed-use] zoning in that particular block, all old residences," Pshebylo says. "Now, those are probably the hottest properties going — facing River Landing. It's all going to be geared towards perhaps professional office space on the main floor, an accountant or something like that, and a residential component upstairs."

Interest has been burgeoning since the Lake Placid development proposal got the go-ahead, he says. People realize that the neighbour-

hood is only a few blocks from the River Landing development, the farmers' market, Midtown Plaza and office, services and amenities in the downtown core.

"There's definitely a desire to look into this type of product [live/work]," says Dana Kripki, a senior planner in the City of Saskatoon's planning and development branch. "People like the idea of living and working in the same place."

"From a planning perspective, we encourage all types of housing development," Kripki adds. I think there's going to be more demand for it."

Zoning for live/work use didn't exist until relatively recently, notes Alan Wallace, the City's manager of neighbourhood planning. The first mixed-use zone was a result of the Warehouse District local area plan, with changes to the zoning bylaw allowing live/work in 2003.

"We've been trying to make changes to our zoning bylaw to be more inclusive of mixed use areas," Wallace says. "Riversdale is definitely one of those areas that we want to see more mixed use occur in. We're trying to encourage reinvestment in that neighbourhood."

"What we were doing when we first thought of live/work units was trying to revitalize our warehouse district. Many cities had already converted their warehouse districts to allow for artists and others to do some creative work within the place that they live."

DARRELL NOAKES

Home-Based Versus Live/Work Zones

Saskatoon's zoning bylaw regulates businesses, including home-based and live/work units.

A "home-based business" is incidental to the primary use of a dwelling as a residence. A "live/work unit," on the other hand, is a dwelling unit that is also used for work purposes.

Alan Wallace, the City's manager of neighbourhood planning, describes the difference this way: "A home-based business is fairly tightly controlled, because it's in a single unit dwelling. A live/work unit is not. It's a commercial building."

Because a home-based business is zoned for residential use, and a live/work unit for commercial or retail, the building code would apply differently, as well.

Home-based businesses exist throughout the city, but live/work units are permitted only in the commercial areas of the Warehouse District downtown, where the concept was first approved, Riversdale and South Caswell Hill. Technically speaking, live/work units are discretionary use permitted in RA1 and MX1 zoned districts. Areas zoned for B5 permit retail and residential use, but not combined.



Visit www.saskatoon-home.ca/extras.htm to see more photos.

STYLE

Saskatoon Home Trends: Contemporary, Traditional Style and Urban Neighbourhoods

The remnants of architectural trends past can be seen in buildings throughout the city of Saskatoon. Some may be looked upon with wistfulness and others with a “what-were-we-thinking” shake of our heads, but it is the sum of these trends, both good and bad, that have led us to the architectural designs of today.

In single-family dwellings, the Craftsman-styled home has made a resurgence, but this time with a more modern and sustainable edge, according to architect Paul Blaser.

For Blaser, an architect and partner in the firm Rajani Blaser Mannix Architecture, and founding chair of the Saskatchewan Chapter of the Canada Green Building Council, it's a trend he sees as one that also utilizes natural materials such as stone, wood and detailing as a way of giving homes a little more interest.

“I think that any stone, and certainly in Saskatoon, Tyndall stone, a quarried limestone, is something that has always been a part of this place because it's a relatively local material. Brick is also

a very big part of that return to warm, natural materials. Whether it's new bricks, re-used bricks or even exposing existing brick.”

In this new incarnation of a Craftsman home, Blaser says

clean, contemporary lines are the focus along with green sustainable building practices, leading to a style with a lot of different opportunities and influences.

“As we have more money

here, more investment and more focus,” says Blaser. “I certainly would like to see a continued evolution of a Saskatchewan style, but often the styles are something we don't see until we have the benefit



Photos: Kevin Greggain

This lovely home found in Saskatoon's east side is an example of neo-traditional architecture.



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The new Shift Home, created by developer Curtis Olson, is one example of where today's residential architectural trends are heading with straight contemporary lines.

of hindsight. Certainly, I think that 'neo-traditional' is a term that's been thrown around, but I don't think it's really a term that incorporates what's emerging now. I think there is almost a move, to a certain extent, past neo-traditional to a traditional contemporary style. With those clean lines, with those very modern looks, and yet done in really natural, warm, living materials."

Blaser cites the converted Hayloft and the new Shift Home, two residences created by Saskatoon developer Curtis Olson, as examples of where today's architectural trends are heading, with their contemporary lines, created with sustainable materials.

"That's where new, young home-buyers, those who have had a chance to see more of the world, are leading us. This is the stuff that is interesting and the stuff that magazines are featuring."

Another home trend in Saskatoon that Blaser sees emerging as a response to people's desires, is a return to traditional urban neighbourhoods.

"Certainly in housing developments across North America, the return to traditional urban neighbourhoods has been a trend for quite a while," says Blaser. "People are getting tired of long drives and commuting long distances, and one of the ways that developers are responding is by providing smaller lots and a return to back alleyways."

Saskatoon has not yet experienced the same rapid expansion into suburban-like developments like many other North American cities. Blaser thinks that the lessons these other cities have learned in the process can help Saskatoon through its own current period of growth.

"Although there are suburban-like developments in Saskatoon," says Blaser. "Nothing is really more than a 15-minute drive away, whereas a lot of cities have grown to where a half hour or forty-five minute commute can be quite standard."

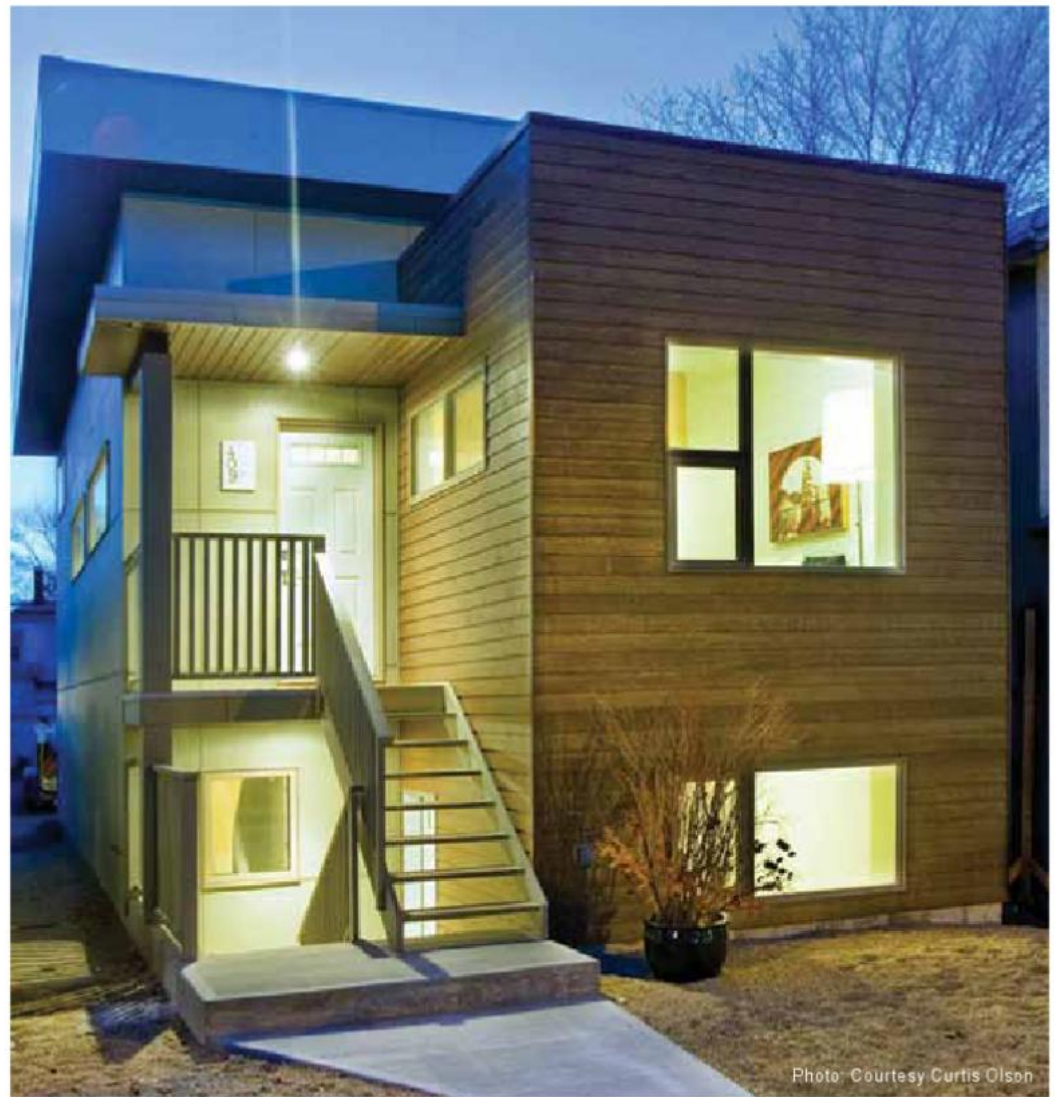


Photo: Courtesy Curtis Olson



Photo: Kevin Greggain

The development of two-story homes, with prominent fronts are being built on smaller lots to create grand curb appeal and minimize urban sprawl.

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Where once developments boasted sprawling ranch-style bungalows and bi-levels with a garage prominently featured at the front of a home, today's trend leans to smaller lots with standard two-storey homes with prominent front street access and garages located in the back.

"As you get further out, and lots are wider and there are no back lanes, it's very difficult because the car is still how people get around in the city, and so it's difficult to take up a larger portion of your lot and

yard to drive to some kind of a coach house parking in the back," explains Blaser. "But in more dense, multi-unit developments, we're seeing that garages and parking are being consolidated off the lane ways and at the back. This allows for the front door and porch or front sitting area to dominate the street, and allows people in the neighbourhood to see each other more, which ultimately, I think is a great thing."

GAIL JANSEN

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DÉCOR

Her H(Art) in Downtown: Entrepreneur follows dream to live part-time in urban Saskatoon loft

"As soon as I opened my Saskatoon store two years ago on Second Avenue, I had seen that they were converting this building to lofts, and I told myself that this was my dream," says Sandra Young, who owns Willow Studio downtown. "If I could make it happen, I wanted to get a loft here at the Second Avenue Lofts."

For Young, it was a dream come true. After growing up in Saskatoon and completing high school at Rosthern Junior College, a tradition started by her parents and grandparents, the entrepreneur spent time traveling, designing window displays and store fronts in Yorkton, Prince Albert, Regina, Saskatoon, and North Battleford. Then she opened businesses in Regina, Yorkton, Prince Albert and North Battleford. She met her future husband, Todd, a systems analyst, in Regina, and the couple settled in Calgary, where Young established a home furnishings and design company. She expanded into other locales like the hamlet of Bragg Creek, Regina and Moose Jaw with the help of family members.



Photos: Darrell Neakes

Sandra Young's airy loft is a breeding ground for animated conversation about the lively decor.

But Saskatoon, and the distinctive Hudson's Bay department store, always held fond memories.

"I used to shop here when I was a kid," Young says. "I used to take the bus from East College Park when I was a young teenager. I would hop on the bus and come here with my girlfriends. I felt so grown up to be able to hop on the bus by myself, go shopping at the Bay and go for a malt at the Malt Stop with my girlfriends. To me, the thought of being able to come full circle here, starting a business in Saskatoon after being away for so long, to be able to go back to my

roots, felt like a great idea."

Young's daughter, who also graduated from Rosthern Junior College, studies art and painting at the University of Saskatchewan. That helped provide the impetus for opening the Saskatoon Willow Studio.

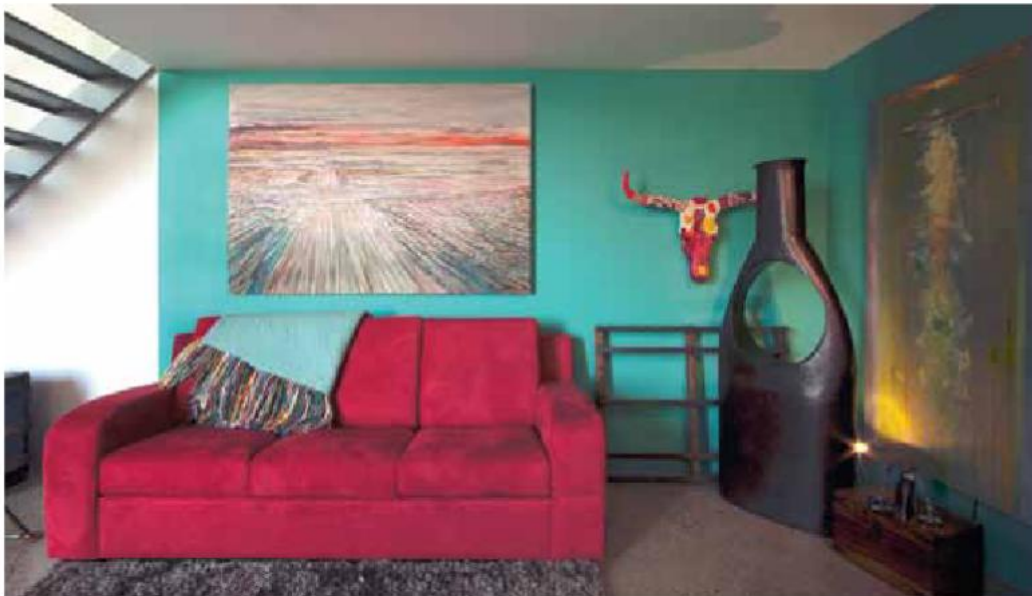
"I think I was just lonesome for my daughter," she says. "I thought, what better reason to reconnect in Saskatchewan. I could spend some time with her and develop a business that I love."

Young spends about a week a month in Saskatoon. It's not enough, she says, but she can't afford to be away from

the family's Calgary home and business any longer than that. In Calgary, they live on an acreage, so returning to Saskatoon, especially to the urban residential environment, feels refreshing.

"To live in an urban setting is the ultimate juxtaposition for me for my quiet life in the country at home. To have that combination of lifestyle makes me appreciate each lifestyle far more. It's like a vacation property for my family."

"I love the energy of the downtown and the business owners here," she says. "We're all really working hard to try to make it a better place. It's



This nook, besides being an appealing place to relax, perfectly showcases the artistic creations.

in everybody's best interest and our city's best interest to support downtown business and to support downtown living, so that our city maintains some vibrancy and doesn't fall the way of so many American cities, or others around the world."

There's an energy to downtown living, she adds. "I love things like Persephone Theatre, Taste of Saskatchewan or the Jazz Festival."

"My husband, Todd, and I often mention that there is more art per capita in downtown Saskatoon than in all of some other cities that we've lived," Young says. "I think



Even the kitchen serves as an art gallery.



Sandra Young has coordinated the colours and decor in this bedroom to ideally enhance the art work.



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that's what's brought us back to this place — our appreciation for art. The Mendel Art Gallery was a staple growing up — going to the Mendel Art Gallery on a regular basis, going to the symposiums on the river bank. I used to hang out with my Uncle Bill Epp and all these artists, doing all these symposiums on the river bank, watching the artists work."

"My background is more in display design and interior design, so that has always been my bread and butter. However, my real passion lies in art. Over the last 12 years, my design studio has evolved more to promote artists."

Second Avenue Lofts embodies urban living, Young finds. Residents meet each other as they come and go. Yet, the suites are quiet, giving everyone the privacy they desire. There are common spaces for entertaining and exercise. Young's suite overlooks a rooftop outdoor lounge that will soon be open to those in the building. Although the building has been open for only a couple of years, Young says that residents have already established a tradition of celebrating New Year's together, roaming from suite to suite, "like a potluck."

Much of the appeal of downtown living comes from the services that are within walking or cycling distance. The restaurant selection is outstanding, says Young.

"Last night, I biked to Broadway and enjoyed the services there, the restaurants and local coffee shops. In this neighbourhood, Second Avenue is just alive with restaurant and shopping choices."

The Loft is an Art Gallery

Young's suite at Second Avenue Lofts has become a showcase for artists.

"I don't have enough wall space in the studio," Young explains. "I usually have three to five artists shown in our 3000 square foot show room. I thought, how can I show these people for a longer period than I can at the studio? So I started bringing pieces over and the show has revolved at the loft. When we have art clients wanting to look at art, we bring them over as a personal tour to see art in a furnished space to give them a sense of how art would look in a home."

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SPOTLIGHT

Couple's Buena Vista Residence Provides Peace and Yesteryear Ambience

Bev and Julian Beaudry love the appeal of Buena Vista. The heritage neighbourhood, celebrating its 100th birthday this fall, conveyed an atmosphere and character that the couple couldn't resist. It was their starting point when they were looking for a place to live.

"We started with the area, because it was close to Bev's work," says Julian. "We drove by this house and said, 'Hey, that looks interesting!'"

Bev owns Witch's Brew Metaphysical Books & Gifts on Broadway. Julian spends much of his time out of country, working the rigs. It was important to find a place to live that was close to Bev's work, in a neighbourhood that held the warmth and charm of Nutana and the Broadway district, and that anchored a sense of "home."

"We had picked out a few houses for sale that I liked," adds Bev. "We looked at three or four, but as soon as I saw this one, I just fell right in love — this is it, this is the house. I loved the floors and the 'oldness' of it."

That was four years ago. The Beaudrys moved from their farm, where their son still lives, a couple hours



Bev loves the hardwood floors and the "oldness" of this quintessential Buena Vista home, built in 1921.

east of the city. They tried an apartment condominium, but that environment lacked the appeal they hoped to find in Saskatoon.

The couple's house has a character that perfectly enhances the antiques, crystals and other items that embellish the interior.

Heritage Charm Preserved

Built in 1921 and designated the Abrams House, the original appearance of the residence has been kept intact. The Saskatoon heritage database shows that it was entered in the 1987 City of Saskatoon Awards for sympathetic renovation. The heritage office

notes that the "it remains as a beautiful example of historical architecture for residential homes in the Buena Vista area."

The Beaudrys continue to preserve the look and feel of the house. They've added French doors to the kitchen to provide access to a secluded, cozy part of the side yard, and provided a suite in the basement, where their daughter lives.

Yet, they have made no changes to the wonderful heritage architectural components.

The couple has transformed the back yard into a relaxing sanctuary that provides a place to feel at ease on

a summer's evening when the warm-hued, late-day sunlight filters through the foliage.

Every old home holds memories, and seldom do we have the privilege to glimpse the lives that filled the place before we were there. One day, earlier this summer, just as she had come home from work, Bev encountered two elderly women, accompanied by an equally senior man, looking at the house. The women told Bev that they had grown up in the residence. The man was familiar with the house, too. He visited frequently while courting one of the sisters, whom he married.



The secluded back yard is an ongoing labour of love. Joe Laturnus, better known as "Joe the Rockman", designed the yard and continues to develop it with Bev's help.

"They were anxious to see the trees," says Bev. "The two pine trees were planted when the ladies were born, by their

father." The trees now tower 60 feet or more above the property, standing like sentinels on either side of the house.

"The garage was still the same. The garage was important to them, that it was still the same garage. They came

in the house and it was just wonderful, wonderful, to be a part of it, to be here so that they could come in. Watching the memories flood across [the faces of] these people was awesome. It made their trip, and they were quite happy. It was nice to be a part of that."

The residence is also a suitable complement to Bev's work. The gifts and crystals that she sells at Witch's Brew add a very peaceful element to the home. Conversely, Bev can integrate her home's sense of peace into the store.

"I love it, that I can bring my dog, Tony, to work," she says. "People come into the store looking to say 'hi' to Tony, because it makes their day. Whether I can give them a crystal or an oil or a pet from my dog, to make someone's day means a lot to me."

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TRANSFORMATION

Eyesore Becomes Eco-friendly Home

Former Drug House Now a Modern Live/work Infill

Once Leon Goldman's neat and tidy neighbourhood grocery in 1911, the two-storey brick store cum apartment block on Avenue C North became known as the "drive-by pharmacy" in its declining years. Drugs and money changed hands with alarming regularity. The neighbour's fence was routinely kicked down so as not to obscure the pay phone on the corner where drug buyers would call in their arrival.

When the drug house was razed and the tiny 30' x 60' lot repossessed, the neighbourhood let out a collective sigh. When Crystal Bueckert and Martin Bennett bought the weeds-and-garbage infested property in 2007, neighbours once again peeked out of their windows. Now they like what they see.

Building customized homes on urban infill lots with an existing infrastructure, and incorporating green elements and living and working in the same space, is a new wave of sustainable home design. This approach is revitalizing urban areas one tiny footprint at a time.

In the Bueckert/Bennett case, the design variances for



Photos: Kevin Greggain

Crystal Bueckert and Brian Bennett's new home took a year to design and the results certainly show it.

the house on the non-conforming lot required an appeal to the City. As an architectural designer and artist, Bueckert and Bennett, also an artist, offered what they describe as an innovative prototype for the City to develop other nar-



Photo: Courtesy Crystal Bueckert

The original house.



The office is sparse and light-filled.



Like the other rooms, the bedroom has clean lines and gallery walls.



The kitchen is galley-style, streamlined and effective.

trial aesthetic shows itself in the raw steel plates and hardware, the exposed structure, dimensional lumber, polished concrete floors and metal-clad wood windows. Since the original grocery store on the lot was brick, the home has a brick exterior that has been enhanced with a modern addition of acrylic stucco and clean lines.

The couple designed their new home for living and working. The two artists insisted on clean lines, gallery walls and tall spaces. Martin's massive canvases are accommodated in the main studio area. The second floor loft, with higher ceilings and exposed sub-floors, serves as the main living area with a small but efficient galley kitchen. Bueckert and Bennett are not into the Saskatchewan tradition of gathering in the kitchen for a dinner party; in fact, Bennett prefers cooking solo without an audience. "We built this for us and how we do things."

Low consumption and low impact urban living is how they do things. By living and working within a small radius, getting by without a car (she's selling her car to join a car co-op), by busing, walking and cycling to markets and shops, purchasing only what is needed, and by planning a green home, city dwellers like Bueckert and Bennett become eco-conscious citizens.

Creating a sustainable home "has to do with the building science and building systems," Bueckert explains. "Proper vapour barriers, good insulation, radiant in-floor heating, reflective foil, solar panels to heat our water so we use practically no gas in the summer. Even in winter, we expect that 50 to 70 per cent of our hot water needs will

row and marginal sites for inner city neighbourhoods and high-density suburban housing developments. The City liked what they heard.

"We spent an entire year designing the house," explains Bueckert in the light and airy third floor garret that contains her workspace and the master bedroom. "We needed that time to tailor the design and layout to fit our lifestyle and daily functions." She laughs. "This home is an entirely custom-tailored project! Each decision was based on what would work for us, not for some unknown resale buyer at some vague point in the future."

The couple designed the house with a part-industrial, part-domestic sensibility. It has borrowed the warehouse elements of the nearby business district but has incorporated the sympathetic design elements that blend with the neighbourhood. The indus-

be met by solar energy. This house uses very little of anything. In fact, right now I have a \$400 credit with City utilities," she grins.

Growing up on self-sustainable farm, Bueckert says the low consumption concept was always the way to go. Being the daughter of a building contractor makes for no fear of wielding a hammer. Awareness about what they use made the couple's decisions about sustainable house design simply routine.

Bueckert and Bennett's green elements take advantage of the lot's southern orientation by using windows and interior thermal mass to heat the house solar passively. Active solar energy comes from hydronic heat and solar thermal panels that heat concrete floors. The couple has made up for the site deficiency (no garden area) by

planting a "green roof" for herbs and native plants. Outdoor xeriscaping with native plants, mulch and gravel will eliminate lawn watering. During warmer months, no mechanical air conditioning will be necessary due to the ventilation shaft designed as part of the main staircase.

"The livable city is a really hot topic and is being studied by urban planners and designers," says Bueckert. "Saskatoon is paying attention to this and there are great people working on this lifestyle shift as we revitalize the city's core areas. We feel pretty good that we're contributing what we can to this beautiful historic neighbourhood."

Very likely, grocer Leon Goldman would be pleased.

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INSIDE

A Different Kind of Housecleaning: Keep Your Home's Air Free of Allergens and Irritants

Warning: The interior of your home could be encouraging your asthma, allergies and other related sensitivities. **Relief:** There are both some common-sense but also surprising measures you can take to minimize many of their triggers.

Asthmatics experience wheezing, coughing and shortness of breath. The causes of asthma in individuals aren't known although researchers think different factors such as family genes and environmental exposures can interact to cause it to develop, usually early in life. Exposure to allergens and irritants in the air can make the airways of those with asthma more reactive.

Those with allergies can experience far more than sneezing, congestion and itchy eyes, but also other conditions besides asthma including headaches, sinusitis, ear infections, skin reactions and even the swift, severe body reaction known as anaphylaxis, when the body literally goes into shock.

Allergens include mould, dust mites, pet hair and dan-



Carpets might actually help your allergies if cleaned properly and regularly.

der, and pollen, all of which can be present in a home.

Caring for Carpets and Other Coverings

Many people believe that carpets are a culprit for stimulating asthma and allergies, and that interior conditions improve if floor coverings are something other than carpets. This is the theory that they trap and collect allergens.

Dean York, owner of two Chem-Dry carpet and upholstery cleaning franchises in Saskatoon and Prince Albert, disagrees. "Carpets that are on a regular maintenance schedule for cleaning can actually act as a filter in your home," he says. "Our system uses hot

carbonated water, not chemicals, to create balanced pH levels in your home—and is recommended by the Quebec Asthmatic Association for asthma sufferers—due to the 'chemistry not chemical' process of carbonation cleaning."

York also has another suggestion: "Give your drapes a shake. See the dust that is trapped in them? And what kind of dust is in on your lamp shades, wall coverings, and furniture and bed coverings? The trick is removing it safely and quickly."

Following a thorough cleaning of all of these items, you might want to consider Chem-Dry's natural ingredient Dust-Might Anti-Allergen treatment which can be

directly sprayed. Allergens found in dust mite droppings are instantly de-activated, says the company.

Afterwards, clean all materials and surfaces with a vacuum cleaner that has a high-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filter to prevent the vacuum exhaust from redistributing some of the fine dust particles back into the atmosphere.

Taking Care of the Inside Air

To remove inside allergens and other irritants, you might want to consider an air filter.

"While a HEPA filter is definitely the best method, delivering 99.97% filtration, there are cheaper alternatives that may also benefit the homeowner," says Chris Franko

of Saskatoon's Caliber Air Repair Furnace and Duct Cleaning.

"Installing an ultraviolet light system in your air stream will eliminate airborne germs and viruses by emitting UV-C light."

"Electronic air cleaners work great if they are maintained properly. However, if they are not kept clean, you may spend a lot of money in replacement, repairs and maintenance," continues Franko. "Next is the electrostatic air filter. It is able to capture up to 90% of those harmful microscopic particles floating in the home. Not only

does an electrostatic air filter have great filtration, but it is washable and should last a lifetime."

Frank also stresses that proper filtration and maintenance of your furnace is important to healthy inside air quality. Keeping the vents clean is cost-effective and keeps the dust to a minimum in your home. "Consider the cost of having to replace the furnace fan because of a dust build up on the motor. It would most likely cost less to have the vents cleaned," he says.

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Other Timely Tips to Reduce Inside Allergens and Irritants

1. Damp-dust your clothes.
2. Wash bedding weekly in hot water.
3. Dust house plants, but don't over-water them, because this promotes irritating mould.
4. Don't allow your kitchens, basements and bathrooms to become humid. To avoid mould that loves moisture, use exhaust fans, oscillating fans and open your doors and windows to allow your home to breathe.
5. Pollen is the #1 culprit from outside. During its high season, keep your windows closed and let your in-home filtration system work.
6. Wash your hands and face, showering after outdoor activity. Remove clothes you wore outside and wash them in hot water.
7. Watch weather forecasts for pollen counts over a 24-hour period. Schedule outdoor activities for later in the day because these counts are generally higher in the morning.




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OUTDOORS

Landscaping the Heritage Home: Original Property Provides Inspiration

Saskatoon is privileged to contain an extensive array of heritage homes whose characters reflect the city's 100 years of history. Today, many of these homes are coming under new ownership and redevelopment, and many of their owners are discovering that living in a heritage house brings with it a responsibility to remain true to the dwelling's original architecture and character, but also to its landscape heritage.

For Denise Balcaen, owner of local landscape design firm Gardens Four Seasons, the key to retaining a heritage home's historical yard and garden flavour is, above all else, patience.

"The home has been there a long time," says Balcaen. "You shouldn't just rush to fill in the blank spots, but rather, have the patience to assess the yard both front and back, and slowly work items into the flow."

Working with the "genius of the home" and the existing landscape, Balcaen advises new heritage homeowners to wait a full growing season before making changes to the existing property layout. This period of time allows you to get a full sense of what the yard will yield.



Front view of Glenda and Ed Risling's home overlooking the rose garden.

"You need to look at the whole big picture of the yard and assess it," stresses Balcaen. "That allows you to get a feel for what you want to keep and what you want to remove in terms of existing vegetation. It will also allow you to see where you should develop patio and deck areas, or even little private nooks and crannies to relax in. This is something older yards offer a lot more of in terms of options that would take years and years to develop in a new yard"

Once the property is thoroughly assessed, Balcaen says

the next step is to have a plan drawn up, whether it's your own or one created with the aid of a professional designer. Its purpose is to create beautiful lines in the landscape that mirror the lines of the home, whether through garden beds that are shaped to accent, or architectural additions such as pergolas or arbours that remain faithful to the period.

Your attention can then be focused on deciding what plants to put in the gardens. In making these choices, you want to take into account the current level of sun exposure which may have changed

over the years due to the maturation of existing trees and shrubbery. You also want to decide if you want to use plants sourced from original heirloom seeds or those that would have been typical of the period.

Heirloom plants or seeds are those defined as in existence before 1951, when hybridization and cross-pollination of species became more commonplace. Many of these plants are "correct" for the landscaping of a heritage home in a historical sense. However, they can also have inherent difficulties for grow-

ing, so newer hybrid versions of these old-fashioned plants might want to be considered for an easier gardening experience.

"There are a lot of new varieties that have been developed from the old heirloom varieties," says Balcaen. "Varieties that are more disease and pest-resistant, and have additional desirable qualities, that overall are better for the gardener."

Topping Balcaen's list of heritage-style plants that fall under this category are: Peonies, whose hybrid version ensures they don't "flop" over, Potentillas, Annabelle Hydrangeas, Dwarf Delphiniums (also imbued with a "floppless" characteristic), and prairie-hardy Shrub Roses, that require little by way of care.

For those who prefer to keep true to the historic value of the older heirloom-styled



Glenda and Ed Risling's front yard, after the couple took a landscaping design course from Gardens Four Seasons.

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plants, Balcaen's recommendations include: Lilly of the Valley, Anemones, Perennial Asters, and Bleeding Hearts, all of which have the necessary old world feel to them that compliments a heritage home.

There are also other more modern plants that Balcaen says will retain the look and feel of a heritage property, while adding a little modernization and drama. These could include the lily-like Hostas that range in size from 6 inches to 3 feet, and the newer ornamental grasses that convey old world charm, even though they weren't in existence 100 years ago.

"I really like the Karl Foerster [Feather Reed] grass as

an example," says Balcaen. "It gives a nod to the Victorian look but still has a new and modern feel to it."

In the long run, those looking to compliment their heritage homes with the appropriate plants often need look no further than their existing landscapes, with a few added touches here or there.

"The best advice I can give someone working with an older yard is to work with the existing environment," says Balcaen. "Whether it's extreme shade, extreme sunlight or extreme vegetation, try and work with as much there as possible and choose plants that would thrive in it."

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BACKWORDS



Photo: Jessica Storozuk

This favourite Saskatoon community still retains its venerable, comfortable flavour.

Historic Buena Vista Neighbourhood Celebrates 100 Years of Character and Community

Buena Vista means “beautiful view” in Spanish. When Saskatoon’s Buena Vista area

was first surveyed, it had a view so sensational and far-reaching, you could see your dog running away for about three days. Back in those days, Saskatoon barely reached past the corner of Lorne Avenue and 8th Street. It took quite a visionary to see a thriving neighbourhood in what was then simply a patch of bald prairie. But Saska-

toon was booming and the real estate men descending on her in packs made their living out of seeing something where previously there had been nothing.

The oldest part of Buena Vista – from 4th to 8th Streets between Lorne and Clarence Avenues – originally belonged to the Temperance Colonization Society as part of the

land granted to it in 1882 to create a Saskatoon colony. By the fall of 1910, it belonged to the Commercial Traveller’s Investment Company who were anxious to cut it up into lots and get it onto the real estate market.

At about the same time, Henry Vivian, an English member of Parliament and an early supporter of city



The paddling pool at Buena Vista park in the 1940s.



The official opening in 1937 of the paddling pool in Buena Vista park was well-attended by city councillors, members of the Kinsmen Club, Playgrounds Association officials and member of the Parks Board. Ironically, all the children are on the outside of the fence.

planning, was in the city speaking out against the evils of urban crowding and tenement housing. A number of Saskatoon aldermen heard him speak, and when the Commercial Travellers submitted their subdivision plan for Buena Vista a few days later, they demanded that provision be made for a good-sized park and that 8th Street be substantially widened to accommodate a proposed bridge.

The plan was duly modified and accepted, with the company making a tidy sum on

the new park, land that cost the city nearly \$11,000.

The south half of Buena Vista was added the next year, and by 1912, the map of Buena Vista – if not the physical reality of it – was much as it is today.

The dreams of the land speculators who fuelled Saskatoon's pre-war boom went to pieces in 1913 when the bottom fell out of the real estate market. The blow might not have been fatal had not the First World War come along a year later. The upshot was that a great deal of land

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that had been bought up and divided into lots for people to purchase and to build houses on, remained empty. In many cases the owners let the lots get taken by the City for non-payment of taxes.

The flood of new people into Saskatoon stopped, and many areas – including most of Buena Vista – remained sparsely populated for decades.

Particulars of the Park

The park has always been a vital part of Buena Vista, although occasionally not in ways you might expect. In 1911, a pair of Minneapolis-based landscape architects named Morell and Nichols were hired to draw up plans for the park. The original layout included formal gardens, trees, gravelled walkways, wide sweeps of lawn and a decorative pagoda, none of which were built precisely as envisioned.

Park planners in those days made a clear distinction between parks and playgrounds. Parks were for walking through, admiring the flowers and perhaps having a picnic. Playgrounds were for children to run around in and



Many of the houses in Buena Vista are very distinctive. The neighbourhood is old enough to have tall trees.

kick balls. At one point, the city even hired a park policeman to enforce the rules, and there were signs in various parks forbidding the playing of games.

But it's hard to keep young people out of parks, particularly after the sun goes down. This is still the case.

In the late 1920s, local resi-

dents complained on several occasions about young people frequenting the park after dark. What exactly it was they were doing was not specifically mentioned, although presentations to City Council included the phrases "disgraceful and disgusting" and "a menace to public morals." One speaker hinted that

what he knew could only be told to a small committee, not right out in open Council. The delegations demanded that shrubs and trees be cut to make it impossible for young people to hide in the park.

Council demurred, saying that any cutting of the trees would ruin the park's beauty.

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Besides, the Mayor added, there was some difficulty in lighting the inside of the park, and in any case, as the City Commissioner noted, it would be almost impossible to make all parts of it visible. Council would agree only to stepping up police patrols in the area, and thus the young folks necking in the park were safe for another year.

Various amenities were added to the park over the years. The Kinsmen Club, with financial help from the city, built Saskatoon's second paddling pool in the park in 1937. The bowling greens were added in 1940. The Playgrounds Association, a private organization which ran all the recreational facilities in Saskatoon from 1930-1963, ran a summer sports and activities program out of the

park very similar to the ones that operate in the city's playground units today.

School Still Standing

Another focus of the Buena Vista community is the school. One of Saskatoon's few remaining "castle"-type schools, Buena Vista opened on April 1, 1914. One of its first principals was William Holliston, for whom Holliston School and the Holliston neighbourhood are named. The late Sid Buckwold, a longtime mayor and alderman in Saskatoon, and a member of Canada's Senate, attended Buena Vista School. Today, the school has been extensively renovated and restored, and the innovative city-wide Eco-Quest outdoor education program is run from here.

Buena Vista Expands

Nowadays, Buena Vista extends all the way to the river and includes the Idylwyld Freeway, built in the mid-1960s. The freeway follows the path of Saskatoon's first railway line, the Qu'Appelle, Long Lake and Saskatchewan, which came through here on its way from Regina to Prince Albert in 1890. It was our only link with the outside world for nearly 20 years, and was vital to Saskatoon's survival.

Today, Kilburn Hall, at Kilburn Avenue and 6th Street, is a provincial juvenile detention centre. But when it was built the 1920s, it was the Saskatoon Children's Shelter, run by the Children's Aid Society with a grant provided by the City of Saskatoon. The Shelter included orphanages and foster care centres as well as a baby's ward. The children who

lived there often attended Buena Vista School. In 1959, new legislation came into effect governing foster care for children, and the Shelter fell under provincial jurisdiction.

Buena Vista perched out on the southeast edge of Saskatoon until after the Second World War. The great building boom of the 1950s and 60s saw people pour into the new areas south of 8th Street and east of Clarence. Neighbourhoods went up almost overnight, it seemed, and Saskatoon soon stretched out toward the horizon. Now celebrating its 100th birthday, Buena Vista – that little patch of bald prairie far out on the city's fringe – is a comfortable, older neighbourhood in the centre of town, steeped in history and community, and looking forward to its next 100 years.

JEFF O'BRIEN

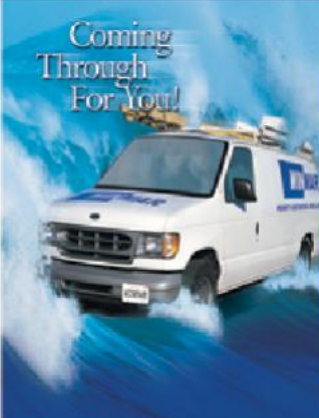
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